

Sustainable Lodging in the Adirondacks



This document was made in partnership with Paul Smith's College
Field Studies in Hospitality - Spring 2022 class & ecomadic – a
curated marketplace for local & sustainable travel.

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Making the Adirondacks a Hub for Sustainability



Greetings Lodgings & Accommodations of the Adirondacks!

As a National Historic Landmark and protected UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the Adirondacks have the immense potential and imperative to become a leading hub for sustainable tourism. The region's long term economic future, for both local communities and tourism businesses, hinges upon the preservation of its natural environment & resources. The Adirondacks' year round communities are keenly aware of this, often instilling values of environmental stewardship in children from a young age.

With that in mind, local students from Paul Smith's College Field Studies in Hospitality class and the Lake Placid 2023 World University Games, in partnership with [ecomadic](#) – a curated marketplace for local & sustainable tourism businesses - offer the following sustainability brief to help your business become part of the movement for sustainable tourism. It outlines criteria for a practical roadmap to assess and adopt best practices in economic, environmental, & social responsibility. As an outline for an ongoing journey, it includes both short term, actionable solutions and long term recommendations that can positively impact the environment, save money, and benefit the Adirondack community.

Sincerely,

Students of Paul Smith's & ecomadic

ecomadic's Areas of Sustainability

Environmental

Does your accommodation monitor its environmental impact? Consider the following indicators to audit environmental impact and awareness.

- **Environmentally Conscious:** Sustainable accommodations are part of a sustainable movement or community, raising awareness of environmental issues, and connecting with other sustainably-minded businesses.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Sustainable accommodations strive for energy efficiency, ideally using renewables like solar and wind, but also implementing energy-saving infrastructure (thermopane windows, compact fluorescent lightbulbs, etc).
- **Water Efficiency:** Sustainable accommodations strive for water efficiency. Their water conservation efforts are intentional, systematic, and they take into account local water sources and/or drought conditions.
- **Waste Management:** Sustainable accommodations strive to be as circular and “zero-waste” as possible, minimizing food waste, banning the use of plastic, and recycling and composting where possible.
- **Responsible Sourcing:** Sustainable accommodations ensure that everyday products (i.e. toiletries, linens, cleaning supplies, furniture) and food products are regionally sourced, organic/natural, and bulk/refillable.

Social

Is your accommodation a fair employer and community partner?

A sustainably-minded accommodation strives to participate in local heritage and culture and provide economic opportunities to locals, with a focus on supporting local minority groups and women. They are engaged with community-wide issues and provide a supportive work environment to employees.

ecomadic's Areas of Sustainability (cont.)

Economic

Does your accommodation keep tourism dollars within the local economy?

Sustainable accommodations keep tourism dollars in the local economy – by hiring locals, partnering with local businesses, or donating to local causes – to uplift local communities and preserve the integrity of a destination and foster a positive relationship with locals.

Supply Chain

Does your accommodation vet suppliers for high standards of sustainability?

Accommodations with a high standard of sustainability vet their suppliers, holding suppliers to similar standards of sustainability in social, economic, and environmental practices. For example, an accommodation can partner with tour operators that are locally supportive and eco-friendly. Additionally, they can work with restaurants or cafes that source food from local, organic farms. This kind of mindset creates an ecosystem of sustainable organizations within a local area – strengthening the movement overall.

Future

Is sustainability part of the long term vision for your accommodation?

Achieving and maintaining a high standard of sustainability is an ongoing journey. Sustainable accommodations have a long term sustainability mission and staff dedicated to measuring sustainability goals. As the field evolves, so too should sustainably-minded accommodations evolve, adopting new technologies and raising standards.

For more sustainable tourism inspiration from [ecomadic](#), check out our [online magazine](#).

Local Expertise: Actionable Solutions from Students of Paul Smith's College



Based on ecomadic's framework for sustainability, the students of Paul Smith's College *Field Studies in Hospitality* class researched best practices in lodging and came up with the following advice for accommodations to take quick and effective steps to improve their sustainability.

Social - Supply Chain - Economic



- **Create A Social Mission:** Develop a social mission with your team to drive social sustainability efforts that support a diverse range of stakeholders including employees, the local community, and guests.
- **Prioritize local businesses in your supply chain:** Partner with local restaurants, farms, artisans, and other shops with a high standard for sustainability.
- **Support the local community:** Create a long term relationship with local organizations. For example, donate to ADK Action's Farmacy Project which aims to eliminate food deserts in the Adirondacks by bringing local farm fresh food to rural communities.
- **Hire local, invest local:** Hire local individuals for year-round, full-time employment opportunities with potential growth. Pay a living wage and encourage employee retention by offering benefits such as childcare, tuition reimbursement, or housing subsidies.

Environmental

- **Energy Efficiency:** Provide charging stations for electric vehicles. Place lighting and HVAC systems on timers to reduce energy consumption. Install thermopane windows and blackout shades for heat retention. For staff – provide incentives for employees to walk, bike, or carpool to work.
- **Renewable Energy:** Switch to renewable energy sources such as hydroelectric at Northern Power and Light or ADK Solar. Take advantage of New York State's Community Distributed Generation (CDG) by directing dollars to local renewable energy facilities (small solar or hydro). The result is a significantly higher rate for the local energy provider at no extra cost to the consumer.
- **Waste Management:** Buy in bulk – use large refillable containers for toiletries and cleaning supplies. Ban single-use plastics. Encourage use of reusable water bottles and provide water refilling stations for employees and guests. Provide clearly designated areas for recycling, trash, and compost. Collaborate with local hotels to develop infrastructure for waste management, such as a community organic composter. Consider using an external business to help with responsible waste management – for example, Adirondack-based [Blue Line Compost](#), Vermont-based [Casella](#), or Florida-based soap recycling company [Clean the World](#).
- **Water Management:** Install low flow toilets and showers. Request that guests be a part of the solution by reusing towels and sheets for the duration of their stay. Conduct regular maintenance on pipe systems, checking for leaky faucets, shower heads, and taps. Use greywater systems for landscaping and property maintenance. Reduce use of salt for snow removal to protect waterways.
- **Environmental Awareness & Network:** Connect with other businesses and hotels that implement and promote sustainability – share and learn from best practices. Two businesses leading the way are [Golden Arrow Lake Resort & Gauthier's Saranac Lake Inn](#). Educate employees; make sustainability integral to the workplace culture. Advertise sustainability practices to stakeholders: community, guests, investors, etc.
- **Responsible Sourcing:** Source environmentally friendly cleaning products and toiletries. Use local, sustainable building materials. Landscape with native plant species.



8 Small Steps to Sustainability

We understand that improving sustainability practices requires time, money, and staffing. However, here are 8 small steps that you can take today to make a difference:

Step 1 - Form a “Green Team:” Form a team of staff dedicated to researching and implementing sustainability practices, as well as measuring the outcomes of these practices.

Step 2 - Assess: Conduct a sustainability self-assessment to see what your current strengths and weaknesses are in social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Step 3 - Plan to Integrate: Create a sustainability management plan and sustainability mission that is integrated into day-to-day operations.

Step 4 - Budget: Conduct a sustainability budget analysis. Identify budget items that can be reduced or replaced with sustainable solutions to reduce costs and improve efficiency. For example, low-flow toilets, motion-sensor lights, etc.

Step 5 - Monitor: Track your sustainability progress using tools like Global Sustainable Tourism Council’s Hotel Self-Assessment.

Step 6 - Network: Partner with other hotels and organizations in the community to develop community-wide sustainability such as food composting.

Step 7 - Promote: Communicate your sustainability efforts to stakeholders online via social media channels and email newsletters, as well as in person at events or in conversations with guests. Use clear signage at your property to draw attention to sustainability efforts and spark meaningful conversations.

Step 8 - Fundraise: Explore fundraising opportunities to support ADK sustainability efforts. Some opportunities include Climate Smart Community Awards or NYSERDA Energy Grants.



Are you an accommodation on your sustainability journey?

ecomadic is a curated marketplace for local & sustainable tourism businesses, aimed to make sustainability more accessible, diverse, inclusive, mainstream, and, most importantly, *trustworthy*.

We would love to connect with you.

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